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DEPARTMENT FOR G/TIP, DRL, AND NEA/ARP
BAGHDAD FOR AMBASSADOR ERELI

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SUBJECT: BAHRAIN'S FIRST TIP CONVICTION

REF: 08 MANAMA 777

11. (SBU) Bahrain's Public Prosecution reported to us on January 20 that Arfa Ching, a Thai national, was convicted on one count of trafficking in persons on December 23. The three-judge panel sentenced her to three and a half years' imprisonment and fined her BD 5,000 (USD 13,250). MFA Undersecretary Abdulaziz bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, who chairs the GOB's interagency anti-TIP committee, confirmed the conviction in a meeting with A/DCM on February 12, pointing to the case as a success story for Bahrain's new anti-trafficking law. Bahraini media did not report on the outcome of the case.

12. (SBU) Ching's was the first case prosecuted under Bahrain's Law to Combat Trafficking in Persons, enacted in January 2008. According to prosecutors, she brought three Thai women to Bahrain under false pretenses. When they learned she intended to employ them as prostitutes, one of them contacted authorities, who arrested Ching. The sentence exceeded the minimum sentencing guideline of three years' imprisonment and BD 1,000 (USD 2,650).

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